

Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center
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Diarrhea

Did you know?

- Chemotherapy can damage the cells in your gastrointestinal tract, causing watery bowel movements.
- Diarrhea caused by chemo can be very serious, leading to weakness, dehydration and electrolyte imbalance.
- Diarrhea caused by chemo may not go away on its own and may get much worse without early and proper treatment.

Symptoms of diarrhea?

- Softer, looser, or more watery stools
- More stools per day than your normal before starting chemo.
- For patients with a colostomy, diarrhea is a mild increase in loose, watery output

What to drink:

- Drink 8-10 large glasses of non-caffeinated fluid a day.
- Drink a little at a time, as often as you can.

*What **not** to drink:*

- Don't drink milk.
- Don't drink coffee or alcohol.

What to eat:

- Eat several small meals. Think **BRAT!**
 - B** – bananas
 - R** – rice
 - A** – applesauce
 - T** – toast

*What **not** to eat:*

- Fatty, fried or greasy foods.
- Spicy foods.
- High fiber foods or bran cereals
- Raw fruits and vegetables
- Beans, popcorn, nuts

How to treat?

- Take 2 caplets (4 mg) of Imodium A-D at the first sign of diarrhea, and then take 1 caplet (2 mg) after each subsequent stool.
- If this does not control the diarrhea, then increase Imodium A-D to 1 caplet (2mg) every 2 hours.
- Continue taking the Imodium until you have no diarrhea for 12 hours.

When to call the nurse:

- If you are using the Imodium A-D as instructed above and are still having 4 or more loose stools in one day, then you need to call the nurse.
- Also call the nurse if you are have bloody stools, nausea and/or vomiting with the diarrhea, or fever.